
Economic Wellbeing Pillar: Competiveness, Employment, Education & Skills (CEES)

Thematic Working Group (TWG): Workshop 3, 4 August 2016

Attendees: Joanne Wallace- **Wallace Consulting**, Kim Nesbitt- **ALMAC**, Eileen Stewart- **Armagh Business Centre**, Ciaran Cunningham- **Banbridge Enterprise Centre**, Jerome Burns- **Dept Agriculture**, Patricia Devine- **Invest NI**, Katherine Strain- **Moy Park**, Esther Baird- **Portadown 2000**, Emma McClimonds- **REED**, Heather Kavanagh- **SRC**, Raymond Sloan- **SRC**, Carol Fitzsimons- **Young Enterprise**, Pamela Arthurs- **EBR**, Shirley Devlin- **Invest NI**, Ciara Kilpatrick- **Invest NI**, Prof. Jim Kitchen- **Sustainable Northern Ireland**, Orla Major- **Princes Trust**, Evelyn Hanna- **Libraries NI**, Cara Dallat- **CIDO**, Claire Gordon- **Business in the Community**, Jim McConville- **St Johns Baptist College, Portadown**, Brendan McCann- **TADA**, Gerry Jones- **NICIE**, Nicola Mitchell- **Education Authority**

ABC Council- Sarah-Jane McDonald, Ciaran Tipping, Elaine McAlinden, Natalie Ronaldson, Lynn Morrow, Elaine Gillespie, Catherine McNeill, Damien McEvoy, Malachy Gribbin, Mary Hanna.

Apologies: Nicola Wilson-**ABC Council**, Michael Graham- **CCMS**, Elaine Cullen- **SOAR**, Shane Campbell- **ICBAN**, Rosemary Hughes- **ABC**, Paul Crooks- **EANI**, Paul Kavanagh- **ABC**, Diane Stinson- **ABC Council**, Damien Mulligan- **ABC Council**

1. Welcome & Introduction

Patricia Devine, Invest NI welcomed members as Chair of the CEES TWG.

2. Workshop 2 Report

The Vision, based upon member proposals is:

“We have a thriving and prosperous economy, underpinned by the skills of our people and our dynamic industries which attract investment and opportunities for growth: ABC is the Borough that’s open, ready and equipped for business.”

Joanne Wallace, Wallace Consulting provided a recap of the draft outcomes & actions discussed at the previous session, as per the three inter-linked priorities of:

- Tackling the Skills Deficit;
- Building Career Pathways; and
- Promoting & Supporting Entrepreneurship.

3. Short- Medium- & Long-Term Outcomes & Actions

Joanne presented draft short- and medium-term outcomes & actions for discussion by members. The following Tables were updated on the basis of the discussions (see Table 3.1, 3.2 & 3.3).

Outcome: Information updated to reflect TWG members comments.

Table 3.1: Tackle the Skills Deficit			
Proposed Actions		Detail	Outcomes
1	Establish multi-sectoral Employment & Skills Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore best practice (e.g. Employers Forum (Belfast)); • Ensure representative & private sector membership, undertake cross-sectoral scoping exercise & research, data sharing protocol established, develop future-proof skills action plan & seek funding to deliver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders understand current & future skills needs & are addressing these through private, public, community & voluntary sector partnership; • Targeted initiatives address gaps in sectors which have identified/projected skills shortages in order to meet and maximise business growth & prosperity; • The skills of the resident workforce are aligned to current & projected business need
2	Stakeholder information/engagement process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of existing & future skills needs & potential impact upon local economy & business growth; • Long-term business focused information process 	
3	Develop collaborative initiatives to address skills deficits in target sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review, promote & expand models of good practice in addressing employer needs; • Potential expansion of Banbridge Education Partnership model; • Develop programmes to match & train people for vacancies; • Enhance recruitment support to employers (skills vs qualifications); • Improve programme reach, marketing & attractiveness to employers; • Ensure managers & owners are upskilled according to future business/market needs; • Promote higher level apprenticeships, technical & vocational pathways 	
4	Communicate & celebrate successes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reward & publicise good practice through case-studies & awards 	
Target Beneficiaries		Potential Partners	Potential Indicators (to be aligned to PfG)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils/Students, graduates, unemployed, parents; • Employers & employees; • Teachers/careers advisors; • Disadvantaged/marginalised groups (incl. rural/S75) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools, HE & FE providers, Careers Service; • Business sector/employers, Business Partnership Alliance; • Invest NI, other relevant Government Departments, Business in the Community, Employment agencies (e.g. USEL, Jobs & Benefits) & training providers, ABC Council, Education Authority, Libraries NI, University of Ulster (Skills Barometer), Community & voluntary groups; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <vacancies in target sectors (linked to Skills Barometer); • Increased access to work experience, apprenticeships & on-the-job training

Table 6.2: Build Career Pathways			
Proposed Actions		Detail	Outcomes
1	Establish sub-group of Employability & Skills Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope out existing education, business & enterprise links & collaborations (e.g. Area Learning Communities, Careers Advisory Forum), identify gaps, good practice & develop action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is increased awareness & knowledge around existing and future business needs, local employment & enterprise opportunities & the importance of life-long learning; • More individuals are attaining employability & job-specific skills, obtaining practical work experience & are supported to progress along their chosen career route; • The potential workforce has access to clear & relevant pathways to employment which reflect their own interests & skills, as well as the needs of the local economy
2	Initiate stakeholder information/engagement process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a skills pipeline; • Raise awareness of existing & future skills needs & potential impact upon employment outcomes (e.g. Futureproof your business recruitment practices); • Raise awareness of the variety of career pathways & opportunities within Borough; • Address perceived stigma around technical & vocational routes (e.g. careers fairs, use of role models), collaborative working across education facilities 	
3	Work in partnership to open up career pathways & improve employment outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and/or disseminate career route maps & help create confidence in career choices; • Influence the importance, relevance & quality of careers advice in schools through improving knowledge of skills gaps, local training & employment opportunities & career options; • Open-up practical work experience, apprenticeships & vocational training opportunities – open-up minds on potential career paths; • Work with schools, colleges, community & voluntary sector & other partners to develop a culture of entrepreneurship including primary school onwards 	
4	Develop collaborative initiatives to improve employment readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reward & publicise good practice & success through case-studies & awards (CIPD NI Awards); • Work to embed employability & transferrable skills required for enterprise & employment as a core part of the school curriculum (e.g. new subject area); • Inform initiatives to reskill & support the unemployed, build confidence & encourage flexibility to meet business needs 	
Target Beneficiaries		Potential Partners	Potential Indicators (to be aligned to PfG)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils/Students, graduates, unemployed (incl. NEETS), parents, Employers & employees, Teachers/ careers advisors, Marginalised groups (incl. rural/S75) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools, HE & FE providers, Business sector/employers, Federation Small Businesses, Princes Trust, Young Enterprise, Social Entrepreneurs, mentors/champions, Enterprise Agencies, Community & voluntary groups, Employment agencies (e.g. USEL, Jobs & Benefits) & training providers, ABC Council, Education Authority, Department for Communities, Department for Education, Libraries NI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • >School leavers achieving 5+ GCSEs at Grade C; • STEM related qualifications (L4+); • >Achieving 2+ A levels or equivalent

Table 6.3: Promote & Support Entrepreneurship			
Proposed Actions		Detail	Outcomes
1	Establish Enterprise Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope the sector, identify needs & available support, good practice & gaps, develop action plan & seek funding; • Identify potential growth sectors (e.g. digital, services) & develop strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Borough provides a welcoming, collaborative & supportive environment for business start-ups, growth, innovation & attracting FDI; • There is a diverse stock of thriving local & non-local businesses, which are responsive to market demand & generate improved & higher value employment opportunities; • ABC is recognised as a Centre of Excellence for Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Investment
2	Inform, coordinate & promote initiatives to kick-start enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support needs-based pre-start & start-up mentoring, training & signposting (e.g. based on Business Engagement Programme, knowledge exchanges, Ideation Camps – idea creation support, mentoring & support, Time Banking); • Inform a Business Re-birth Programme – highlighting business successes & failures to enhance learning & resilience; • Promote social economy as a route to enterprise (e.g. SRC Enterprise Firms); • Encourage & enable joint ventures (e.g. schools ambassador) between schools (to include primary) & business to foster creativity & entrepreneurs (e.g. role models, product development & sales) 	
3	Inform, coordinate & promote initiatives to attract investment & develop, protect & grow businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve new & at risk businesses' access to support; • Coordinate & market the types of business support available & how to access it (target new, at risk & potential growth businesses); • Improve business knowledge of available funding avenues (e.g. Council, NI Business Info) • Establish a collaborative business network (e.g. Sectoral champions, B2B support & mentoring, supply chain, training, information); 	
4	Help create the conditions for investment & growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internally & externally promote & market ABC's assets – positive case-studies & build a brand (e.g. Food Heartland model); • Collaborative FDI action plan (sustained targeting, education, upskilling & support to attract & sustain FDI); • Lobby for increased & improved broadband coverage (extend pilot scheme, Super Connected Cities); • Maximise Local Authority Powers of Planning, Social Enterprise & Youth Entrepreneurship to full advantage; • Ensure internal policy & processes promote entrepreneurship; • Land use/availability of business units (incubation units, next step units, office space etc.); • Transport connectivity 	
Target Beneficiaries		Potential Partners	Potential Indicators

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils/Students, graduates, unemployed, employees; • Disadvantaged/marginalised groups (incl. rural/S75); • Employers/Business sector (incl. micro-business, those in decline) & Growth sectors; • Teachers/Careers advisors; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses • Business owners (e.g. role models, mentors); • Schools, HE & FE providers; • Community & voluntary groups; • Agencies (e.g. USEL, Jobs & Benefits); • Banks/investors; • Invest NI, ABC Council, Enterprise NI, Princes Trust, local media, social enterprise, Enterprise Agencies, Department for Enterprise, Department for Communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • >Business start-up rate • >Business survival rate • >Employment rate • >Annual earnings • >Growth in key sectors • >GVA & >Inward investment • >Broadband coverage
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4. Cross-Cutting Themes

Presentations were given on the following Community Planning cross-cutting themes:

- Sustainability;
- Equality, Good Relations & Social Inclusion;
- Rural Development; and
- Communication.

Members discussed issues relating to their Theme in groups.

Sustainability		
Economic	Social	Environmental
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good evidence that what we have proposed is economically sustainable; • Potential to strengthening initiatives around social enterprise & local production & consumption (establish local supply chains) which would also help social sustainability (e.g. buy local, ACE model schemes); 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic wellbeing has strong links with social wellbeing, particularly promoting health & wellbeing, overcoming disadvantage, improving community safety; • Promote health & wellbeing in the workplace; • Partnerships community & voluntary sector to develop skills; • Mentoring initiatives promoting volunteering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is potential to improve environmental sustainability by using existing buildings & brownfield sites for economic use, promoting energy efficiency & renewables, minimising waste & avoiding pollution within the private sector; • Sell financial savings of energy efficiency to business; • We should be supporting ABC businesses to be innovative in their use of this technology; • Circular Economy Programme, environmentally friendly clauses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong links with Revitalisation, Creative Capital, Digital & Physical Connectivity priorities, Improve Energy Efficiency & Waste Management priorities 		

Equality, Good Relations & Social Inclusion		
Equality	Good Relations	Social Inclusion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify under-represented groups (statistics), encourage involvement & upskill (e.g. older people, people with disabilities, BME, females, those with dependants), procurement processes reflect; • Representative groups involved in programme design & promotion; • Reduce barriers (e.g. transport, childcare, qualifications, completing applications/interviews, confidence) • Ensure employers aware of S75 legislation related to recruitment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address chill factors; • Improve mobility; • Partnership working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social clause in procurement
Rural Development		
Challenges	Opportunities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “No definition of rural” • Poor broadband & mobile connectivity; • Fewer facilities/resources, social hubs; • Fewer rural job opportunities; • Weak transport links; • Need to understand differences in rural/urban educational attainment; • Young people leaving the area; • Planning applications for business can be difficult; • Isolation issues; • Political divisions can be more acute; • Varying community infrastructure; • Literacy issues amongst older people; • Poor information dissemination • Lack of succession planning amongst farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to Infrastructure TWG; • Improve marketing through partnership with Ulster Farmers Union, faith based organisations & community & voluntary sector; • Provide basic literacy & numeracy learning opportunities, capacity building; • Work with planning to support rural business development, support for young people who want to farm; • Use halls & facilities in community to create hubs (grants programme to revitalise); • Improve links with careers services, promote opportunities in local area, link community transport 	

Communications	
Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaching those in most need; • Information overload; • Different communication needs amongst specific groups (e.g. Interpreters, people with visual impairments, young people, older people) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need central communication portal & consistent message (Communication Plan with tailored communication methods); • Shared databases (MOU) • Maximise the use of other events to consult/disseminate information; • Better coordination (1 event for everyone – Employers Mall, joined up job fairs, use NI Business Info); • Work in partnership – identify the right person (e.g. Area Learning Careers Advisory Group); • Creative messaging – arts & drama, use free marketing tools, new technology, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, involve young people

5. Next Steps

As this is the final workshop for the TWG, Elaine Gillespie, Head of Community Planning & Patricia Devine, Invest NI thanked the group for their continued support and expertise.

Next Steps are:

- Consideration and prioritisation of outcomes from all six thematic working groups by Statutory Partners (Sept/Oct 2016);
- Consultation and engagement with local citizens and communities (Sept/Oct 2016);
- Draft Plan and formal consultation (Oct- Dec 2016);
- Conduct formal assessments (Oct-Jan 2017);
- Development of final plan (Dec- March 2017).